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Helping Organizations Retain Their Most Valuable Asset

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Preventing Holiday Burnout

If you are prone to experiencing holiday burnout, you can formulate an effective holiday stress management strategy by considering the suggestions below:

1. Develop realistic expectations about the holidays. It is easy to expect too much of the holidays. When we have expectations which are not met (regardless if they are realistic or not), we may feel disappointed, upset or worse. This contributes to holiday stress. Keep expectations for the holiday season manageable by not trying to make the holidays "perfect." Think about what was stressful last year and how that could be different this year.

2. Do more of what you enjoy. Which parts of the holiday season do you want in your life? Which parts would you prefer to do without? Figure out what you want and plan for more of that part in your life.

3. Set boundaries and limits. Be realistic about what you actually have time for. Make a list and prioritize the most important activities. Always think before committing to any responsibility or social event. Learn to say "no" politely but firmly to keep your holiday time manageable.

4. Develop a holiday budget that is based on what you can afford. Remind yourself that it is possible for your family to have memorable holiday experiences without spending a great deal of money. Be sure to include all holiday spending in your budget, including big family dinners, wrapping paper, decorations, parties, etc. Stick to your budget.

5. Plan ahead for potential problems. Make a list of the problems that continually happen every year. Then, plan ahead how you are going to handle them. If your brother and brother-in-law have never gotten along and frequently argue at holiday gatherings, plan ahead how you will respond to this situation.

Relationships...

The Magic



Researchers studying marriage at the University of Washington report that happy couples in stable marriages don't allow their relationship to be overrun by negative feelings. In fact, say the researchers, successful couples maintain a healthy balance between their positive and negative interactions with each other.

Interestingly, a very specific ratio exists between the number of positive and negative interactions in a successful relationship. That ratio is 5 to 1. In other words, stable couples have at least 5 times as many positive interactions with each other as negative ones.

"A good marriage must have a rich climate of positivity," says John Gottman, Ph.D., a University of Washington psychology professor who has been studying married couples for over 30 years. According to Gottman, a healthy dose of positive interactions builds up an emotional "savings account" that helps to pull the couple through difficult times.

Specifically, the researchers say successful couples balance out any negative interactions with positive feelings and actions like showing

interest, being affectionate, showing they care, being appreciative, smiling, paying compliments, laughing or showing concern.

"balance out negative interactions with positive feelings and actions"

- ~ showing interest
- ~ being affectionate
- ~ showing you care
- ~ being appreciative
- ~ smiling
- ~ paying compliments
- ~ laughing

Defusing arguments before they escalate

Additionally, the researchers report that stable couples still have disagreements and arguments just like all married couples. The difference,

however, is that happy couples keep their quarrels from becoming too negative and destructive. "Successful couples," says Gottman, "know how to repair the situation before an argument gets completely out of control." Positive repair attempts include:

- Using humor to break the tension in an argument (like making a silly face or bringing up a private joke)
- Stroking your partner with a caring remark ("I understand that this is hard for you")
- Acknowledging your partner's point of view or feelings ("I'm sorry I hurt your feelings")
- Making it clear you're on common ground ("This is our problem")
- Taking a break if an argument gets too heated and agreeing to approach the topic again when you are both calm.

HMS is here to help

If you need help with issues related to marriage and relationships, contact Human Management Services (HMS) for confidential counseling, referrals or information. Remember, HMS is always available to help you or your immediate family members with any type of personal, family or work-related concern or difficulty. Why not call an HMS counselor today? We're here to help.

Holiday Healthy: Strawberry Salad



With the arrival of the holiday season, also comes the need for some light and healthy eating. Here is a great salad recipe for when you are entertaining.

Strawberry Salad

1/2 cup Vegetable Oil
1/3 cup sugar
1/4 cup cider or wine vinegar
1 garlic clove minced
1/4 tsp salt
1/4 tsp paprika
1/8 tsp black pepper
6 cups torn mixed greens
2 1/2 cup sliced strawberries
1 cup pre shredded White Cheddar and Monterey Jack Cheese

Add croutons or toasted nuts if desired.

Mix all ingredients just prior to serving.
Source: Unknown

HMS SERVICES

PROVIDED BY YOUR EMPLOYER FOR YOU AND YOUR DEPENDENTS

This confidential prepaid program is designed to help employees and their eligible dependents resolve problems which may be interfering with their personal, work or home life. HMS offers help for marital and family issues, substance abuse, job concerns, emotional problems, life adjustments, legal issues, financial matters, and elder care and child care referrals.

If you're experiencing problems which are causing concern, you and your HMS counselor can work as a team to find solutions.

Call HMS for Help:
24 Hours a day: 800-343-2186
www.hmsincorp.com

